

NOVEMBER EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

AUTAUGA CAMPUS MR. TYLER FROST



VACCA CAMPUS MS. LATRICE FREEMAN



MT. MEIGS CAMPUS MR. CERRONE HOLMES



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH SERVICES

December 2021 Newsletter

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



December is a month filled with special activities and celebrations. This month will be no different. Each campus will have special Christmas celebration activities and dinners. Staff may decorate offices and common spaces and celebrate with each other by bringing special treats in to share. In Central Office once again, we will adopt a family through the River Region Christmas Clearinghouse Project to provide a local family Christmas gifts who would not be able to if it were not for the generosity of others.

At the DYS Board meeting this month we will recognize several employees for their dedicated careers of service to DYS on the occasion of their retirements. Please see the list of employees who have indicated their intention to retire in this newsletter. We are excited for them and wish them all the best as they enter the next chapter of their lives.

We will also recognize the DYS Employee of the Quarter and Employee of the Year! We congratulate both of them for the example they set and the recognition by their supervisors and co-workers. Nurse Miller from Autauga Campus is our 2nd recipient of the DYS Employee of the Year. She has been a tremendous asset to this department by her medical experience and her leadership and initiative during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her impact was felt beyond the Autauga campus as she helped position DYS to plan for the challenges and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on our students and staff. Congratulations Nurse Miller on this special recognition!

Finally, I wish each of you a blessed Christmas Season that is filled with the love of family and friends. May each of us find some quiet time during the frenzy leading up to Christmas to thank God for all our gifts and blessings.

In appreciation,

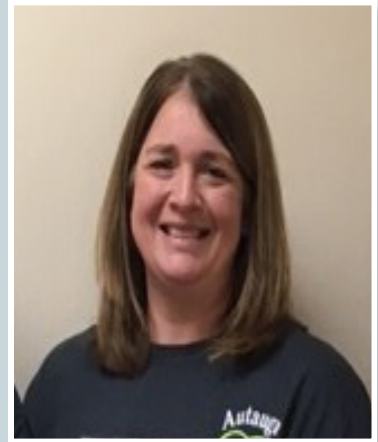
A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Steven P. Lafreniere".

Steven Lafreniere

Congratulations to Nurse Janice Miller!

The DYS 2021 EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR!

Congratulations to Nurse Janice Miller, RN, Autauga Campus Nursing Coordinator for being chosen as the **DYS 2021 Employee of the Year!** “Since being hired at Autauga, Nurse Miller has always gone above and beyond for the students and staff at Autauga. Her dedication to our Department has been exemplarily. During the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, Nurse Miller spearheaded the Department’s response on how we would deal with, treat, and keep our facilities safe despite the staff shortages. She worked with our Executive Director, Medical Authority, Deputy Director of Institutional Services, and staff nurses on all campuses to ensure we had the proper supplies and up to date information on how to treat COVID-19 cases.



JANICE MILLER, RN

Nurse Miller was instrumental in putting together our COVID-19 contingency plan for the Department. During the pandemic, Nurse Miller established a COVID-19 testing site at the Autauga Campus to assist with testing both staff and students. The Autauga Lab enabled the Department to get accurate and quick results to keep our staff and students safe. She trained all Autauga staff on proper techniques needed to assist in treating COVID-19 students as well as trained the other staff nurses on how to properly test for COVID-19. Due to the fact that the pandemic has been ongoing, Nurse Miller is most deserving of this honor because she has been full steam ahead since the beginning. In addition, she has been able to maintain a pristine functioning medical clinic that provides all day medical treatment for students and staff who are in need. The students see the Autauga medical team as neutral caring individuals who are onsite to assistance with medical needs, but also as authority figures who will listen and understand whatever situation they are going through.”

- Nominated by Ms. Alicia Faire, Autauga Campus Administrator

Congratulations to Ms. Felicia Whitted!

DYS Employee of the Quarter!



FELICIA WHITTED

Congratulations to Ms. Felicia Whitted, Youth Services Aide for the ITU dorm, for being selected as the DYS Employee of the Quarter! Ms. Whitted began her employment with DYS in June of 2000. She “has been considered by her co-workers as being seasoned before her time. She is a dedicated, devoted, hard worker who brings joy to the youth entrusted in the agency’s care. As a mother figure, Ms. Whitted greets all who enter ITU with a bright smile. Her dedication throughout the years has been and continues to be worth this recognition.

- Nominated by Ms. Paulette Underwood, Youth Services Specialist

DYS Launches Inaugural Leadership Academy

The Department's commitment to management and leadership development culminated in graduation of the inaugural class of Leadership Academy 1.0. Nine DYS employees, representing various classifications from Youth Services Aide to Campus Administrator, gathered for an intense five-day leadership course developed by DYS for Department employees. According to the Academy Coordinator and training facilitator, Alesia Allen, Executive Assistant to the Director, the Academy was designed and structured to provide preparatory training to existing, potential, and incoming managers and administrators at the facility level as well as approved self-referred or Department identified personnel, including Central Office, interested in leadership development and advancement.

The broad-based comprehensive training is structured to teach and train managers and leaders to perform and carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently. Through the Leadership Academy, participants were provided the opportunity to learn through a variety of strategies and practices designed to address a diversity of learning styles. Didactic, process group, group and individual and experiential work and learning opportunities as well as video, interactive, and lecture strategies were used to present and convey the training material and content.

The inaugural class demonstrated "why" implementing the Academy will be beneficial to the overall leadership development of DYS personnel, which will ultimately impact how the Department carries out its Mission, Goals and Objectives, and Core Values. Co-facilitated with the Director of Training and Staff Development, Melody Nelson, the Leadership Academy also included opportunities for participants to meet and hear from DYS Executive Team members and leaders from within the Department. The participants embraced the Academy which included development of Individual Leadership Plans (ILP) as well as Team Projects. The Department was impressed with the presentation of those ILPs and Team Project Ideas, which was a part of the culmination of Academy activities. The Academy held a Completion Ceremony that included an opportunity to hear from DYS Board Chairman, Charles Smith and DYS Executive Director, Steve Lafreniere. Graduates also received a Certificate of Completion, contact hours, a book on leadership, and an affiliate membership to the Council of Juvenile Justice Administrators.

The Department's goal is to hold the Leadership Academy at least twice a year and recruitment has already begun. According to Ms. Allen, the inaugural class has "set the bar high" for the next class anticipated to convene in Spring 2022. Stay alert to and on the lookout for the next Leadership Academy session.

Congratulations to the 1st Leadership Academy Class of 2021!

Kelsey Artis

Fredrick Moncrief

Tonya Wilson

Latrice Freeman

Verlisia Stafford

Cornelius Williams-Fenderson

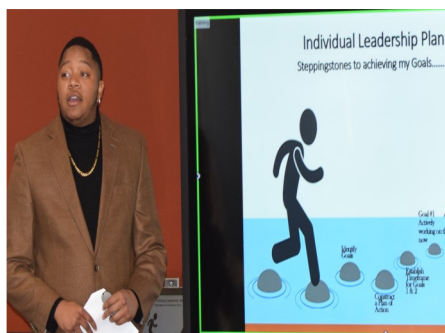
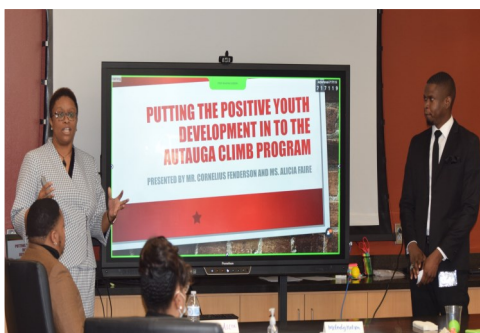
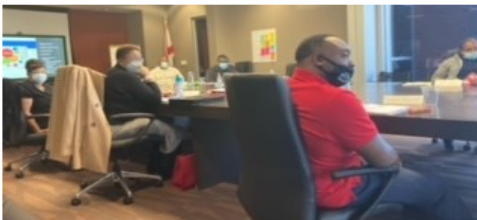
Alicia Faire

LaShondra Hinton

Lexie Spurlock

DYS Highlights

DYS Leadership Academy Photos and Highlights



DYS Highlights



The Vacca Campus Hosts Their Fall Festival Celebration!



On Friday, November 5th, the Vacca Campus hosted their annual fall festival celebration. The students were able to participate in a variety of fun games including sack races, a tic tac toe bean bag toss, slam dunk, ninja warrior ball race, and kick ball. The lunch menu consisted of grilled chicken, fried chicken, baked beans, potato salad, hotdogs, hamburgers, and cookies. After lunch, the students were able to enjoy games inside the Student Union Building. Thank you Ms. Mount and the rest of the Vacca team for making the day special for the youth!



Mt. Meigs Hosts Luncheon for the Campus Beautification Crew

In November, the Mt. Meigs Campus hosted a luncheon for the Mt. Meigs student led Beautification Crew. The Crew, led by Mr. Curry, wears special yellow shirts that represent the Beautification team. The luncheon was catered by Martha's Place and facilitation was led by Ms. Ruffin and the Mt. Meigs team. Purchasing was approved for the team to receive weather appropriate gear such as overalls, hats, and boots. We are proud of this team and their ongoing dedication to keep the campus beautiful!



DYS Staff Participate in the 2021 Job Fair Hosted by Congresswoman Terri Sewell

On Tuesday, November 9th, staff from DYS Central Office and the Vacca Campus participated in the 2021 Annual Job Fair hosted by Congresswoman Sewell. The job fair was held at the Bessemer Civic Center. Government agencies, private businesses, and educational institutions were on site to recruit new staff. The DYS booth recruited a number of interested individuals for potential hire. This job fair is one of many opportunities for DYS as the agency expands its efforts to recruit and retain campus staff. DYS is thankful for Ms. Felecia Thomas, Mr. Byron Jackson, Ms. LaShondra Hinton, Ms. Nikisha Fielder, and Ms. Latrice Freeman for assisting with the days events!



Congresswoman Terri Sewell and Mayor Ken Guley of Bessemer with DYS staff Latrice Freeman, Byron Jackson, Nikisha Fielder, LaShondra Hinton, and Shannon Weston



Byron Jackson, Felecia Thomas, and LaShondra Hinton at the DYS display booth.



October Data Collection Results

The Vacca and Mt. Meigs PbS Performance Outcome Measures and final reports are now available on the PbS website. The outcome measures will be disseminated to the Campus PbS Teams the first week in December. The teams are encouraged to review the results ahead of our Performance Profile call with our coach, Joyce Burrell. Details of the call dates and times will be sent out as soon as we receive confirmation. A post-data collection webinar is set for Wednesday, December 8th at 2 pm. Team members are encouraged to participate. To register, please click on the link below.

[https://urldefense.com/v3/https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7021594923616293133;!!I47Zg8fJQnY!MlmU_dDaxL7P5mS0UYezKzY9DmVxkelSIXEw3b0nY9XezZBdomhDKcC7HI9tRGox0iE_Fgtv7qE\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7021594923616293133;!!I47Zg8fJQnY!MlmU_dDaxL7P5mS0UYezKzY9DmVxkelSIXEw3b0nY9XezZBdomhDKcC7HI9tRGox0iE_Fgtv7qE$)

The Campus PbS Teams should also begin preliminary discussion of changes that may need to be made to the current facility improvement plans. Leadership is also encouraged to review the staff and youth climate survey results and share those results with both dorm staff and students. Thank you to everyone who assisted with data collection and who volunteered to participate in the staff climate survey!

DYS Highlights

Congratulations to all of the DYS Employees Retiring this Year!

Phyllis Carney	25 years
David Rogers	31 years
John Johnson	33 years
Norman Howard	15 years
Karen Gaston	25 years
Jim Bates	32 years
Janice Lewis	42 years
Wendell Ross	31 years
Kendall Milner	30 years

The Vacca FIP Tip of the Week



The "most wonderful time of the year" can be one of the most difficult times for youth in custody. Holidays can bring feelings of grief and disappointment for youth who are separated from family. They may feel isolated and struggle with anxiety, depression, or guilt.

We have the opportunity to help youth get back on the right track. Providing youth with developmentally appropriate activities, building trusting relationships with adults, and maintaining family connections is essential to youth having better outcomes after release.

Our work matters! Our interactions with youth help shape the way they view and feel about themselves. Its important that we support them and show them we believe in their potential.

Ways You Can Support Youth During the Holiday Season

- ♦ Be patient, youth may have more difficulties regulating their mood, being attentive, or staying on task
- ♦ Remind them to focus on positive changes their family would be proud of
- ♦ Encourage them to talk to trusted adults about their feelings
- ♦ Help them write a letter or make a card for a loved one
- ♦ Plan a community service project to help others in need
- ♦ Plan a special holiday gathering for youth